

19. We are, no doubt, still far too much embroiled in the storm of events to be able to view them in perspective or to give a full explanation of why they burst upon us with a force that has seemed almost overwhelming. I have suggested above that on the transfer of power to Indian hands, there was a sudden release of elemental feelings, and of emotions on which the effects of education, or semi-education, and the stimulus exerted for years past by revolutionary leaders cannot yet be gauged. The division of the Old India, which provided the basis for the transfer of power, although agreed to by the Hindu, Muslim and Sikh political leaders, was a grievous disappointment to all three parties. As between the two major communities, it ran counter, on the Hindu side, not only to the fundamental tenets of the Congress Party (let alone the Mahasabha and other political parties and organisations) that India must remain one, but also to a similar feeling in the inmost hearts of large masses of the population including, I should say, not a few Muslims, especially amongst those whose homes and interests are in what is now the Dominion of India. There have always been, and still are, Muslims, including leaders, in the Congress Party; so far as I know, there are no Hindus in the Muslim League. Compensations for Congress, at least, were that the Plan of June 3rd afforded means of getting rid of British rule at the earliest possible date and the hope of creating a strong central Government for what is now the Dominion of India. Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League, on the other hand, only obtained a "truncated, moth-eaten Pakistan" which, however, if far different from the Pakistan of their dreams, they preferred to no Pakistan at all. The ever-deteriorating relations between the leaders of the Congress and the

Muslim League had made it clear that collaboration between them in any Central Government was impracticable; and when the only power which had been able to keep them together (if latterly with ever-increasing difficulty) set a date for withdrawal, the two main parties were forced to accept the best arrangement they could get. Neither was satisfied; one at least - the Congress - did not, I feel sure, regard the arrangement as lasting.

20. Painful as it is to say it, I believe it to be true that the two new Dominions were born of antipathy - to use no stronger word - and pressure of circumstances, rather than of desire to forget the past and face the future in a spirit of mutual co-operation. In the circumstances, as "The Round Table's" leader writer suggests, it would have been a miracle if they had settled down in peace and amity. From the point of view of the Muslims, the partition of the Punjab cut in twain the very heart of Pakistan. The position there was further complicated by the presence of the third party (the Sikhs) who, though relatively small in numbers, had shown signs of being determined to resist the partition of their community by any means in their power. They had for long been animated by hatred for the Muslims; and it may be questionable whether their leader in the last Viceroy's Cabinet, Sardar Baldev Singh, was truly representative of his people. Alternatively, he and/or other Sikh leaders may have accepted partition because there was nothing else for it at the time but rebellion (which they had reason to know would then be ruthlessly put down) but with the ulterior design that if opportunity offered, the Sikhs would somehow or other be brought together again. It is one of the main complaints of the Pakistan Government against the Government of India, in their appeal to H.M. Government and the Dominions, that adequate measures have not been taken to curb and control the Sikhs. There can be no doubt that Sikhs have played a prominent part in the slaughter of Muslims, perhaps even more in the Sikh States than in the East Punjab; and the Sikh refugees who have been moving into that province from the West Punjab in their tens of thousands, have been moving in convoys, with their animals, vehicles and household effects, in quasi-military order, to settle down on the lands from which the

Muslims have been expelled. As I have mentioned above, there is plenty of evidence to show that Sikhs have played a leading role amongst the terrorists who came so near to undermining the Central Government in Delhi; it seems certain that some underground organisation was at work to this end (Pandit Nehru has himself referred to the "core" of lawlessness which must be rooted out and dealt with); and there has been much talk of the intention of the Sikhs to create, sooner or later, a "Sikhistan". In the light of recent events, it can hardly be said, with conviction, that there is no basis for the Pakistan Government's complaint in regard to the Sikhs.

Communal strife burst

upon both new Provinces before they were in a position to grapple with it. This was particularly the case in the East Punjab where, it may be said, the new administration has scarcely ever been able to function. Local conditions were thus all too favourable for passion, anarchy, and chaos. The streams of Hindu and Sikh refugees from West Punjab poured through the East Punjab and carried the germs of communal infection to Delhi and the surrounding country. The Government of East Punjab were virtually helpless; the Central Government were taken unawares; the police were no longer reliable; the Armed Forces, which had to be

called in at once to restore some semblance of order and afford some measure of protection to the ever-growing columns of refugees, were still in process of being divided and were becoming infected by the communal virus. Slaughter in one Province led at once to vengeance in the other; but in all the circumstances, whatever the comparative loss of life and destruction of property, as between India and Pakistan, the difficulties on the Indian side were probably the greater.